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A Plea For 'Moral Authority'

This is a plea for a revaluation of what appears to be an increasingly hardening U.S. position of recourse to military force as a solution for our present international dilemmas.

Perhaps our future as human beings will unroll with the awful inevitability of a Greek tragedy. But as an American I recoil from a passive acceptance of such pessimism. I share with you real hopes for our future and our children's future.

But it does appear to me to be inevitable that reliance upon military force in Cuba, for example, with its inescapable violation of the spirit of our treaty obligations in the Organization of American States, will continue our drift toward a loss of all effective influence in all of Latin America, even if some technicality can be found to take care of the official treaty details.

We must develop real responses to the revolutionary drives stirring all over the world.

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IT APPEARS, also, that we are rapidly squandering the last vestiges of moral authority which our government may be able to demonstrate to the emerging nations of the world.

Information to support such a generalization is not altogether easy to keep up with, but much of it is appearing in your own columns, for which I congratulate you. I fear that such officialdom as CIA may be limiting itself too much to listening primarily to what it wants to hear.

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I ENCOUNTER a distressing amount of cynicism and discouragement among students and young people, many of whom seem to believe that we cannot really compete with Russia in any areas of ideas, accomplishment, or discipline.

These are not young Americans of leftist leanings. On the contrary they seem to be well to the "right" in their political positions—but disillusioned.

A recourse to the same postures we have condemned so energetically in Hungary will answer no problems in Southeast Asia, in Latin America, or in the hearts of our own people, but will seem only to indicate that we acknowledge the system we condemn as our own truth. This will be our defeat, not our victory.

I would regard it as a real service to our nation if your paper would explore these problems in some depth, and if your readers would express themselves.

BEN NORRIS

CPYRGHT

EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer is professor of art at the University of Hawaii.

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